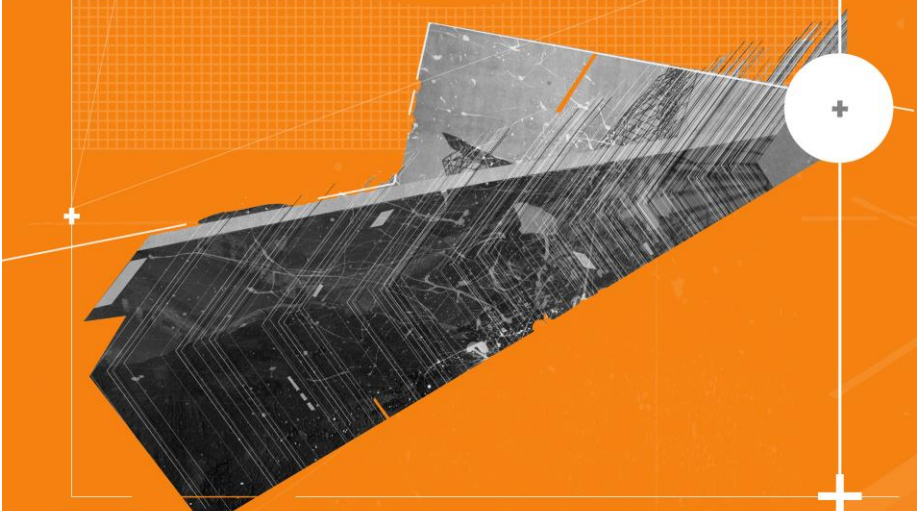
kindle book edition 2015

100

Tips for architecture students



Zean Mair-Macfarlane

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100

Tips for architecture students

by

Zean Mair-MacFarlane

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Author's Note

Architecture is a long and winding road full of challenges. My journey began with studying for my Bachelors degree at the University of Lincoln. Although I was satisfied with my results I aspired for better grades. During my Masters, like many other architecture students, I pushed myself beyond physical and emotional limitations. Throughout this journey I learnt many things; I learnt that hard work can pay off. I now work at Foster + Partners and I am in the process of preparing for my final Part 3 exam.

During my education I discovered that there was a lack of information available for architecture students especially in terms of achieving the results they wanted. Therefore, I created an ebook, soon to be a ‘physical illustrated book’ entitled "100 Tips for Architecture Students".

The layout is simple, and the tips are honest and clear. Every student knows the importance of time. The book is designed so it could be read in a matter of minutes not a matter of days. It touches on the tips, lessons and routines that helped me achieve in my

degree. The book is not a step by step tutorial, it reads more like a to-do list. One of my ambitions was to design a book that could be read and re-read.

A student may also like to take the tips and place them throughout their home or workspace as a constant reminder. The book is designed in a manner which allows the student to utilise the book however it suits their learning style.

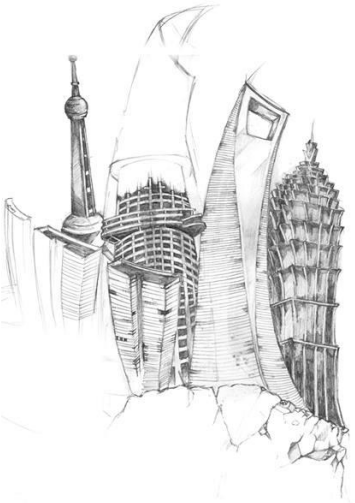
After completing the book, I thought to myself that if I read this at the beginning of my journey I would be at a huge advantage. Ultimately that makes this book valuable. Finding guidance and mentorship can be difficult, therefore my aim is simple, I want to help architecture students early in their education, giving them the insight, confidence and tools to achieve their goals.

Zean Mair-MacFarlane

2015

The Author

Zean Mair-MacFarlane completed his Part 1 and Part 2 architecture degrees at the university of Lincoln (United Kingdom). MacFarlane was able to gain a distinction in his Part 2 along with a RIBA Student Silver Medals Nomination. With experience in teaching architecture MacFarlane has also worked at renowned practices such as Foster+Partners and David Collins Studio.



Architecture

Is this really what you want to do? If so treat it as your number one priority. If architecture is not your passion you will always be one step behind. Take the time to reflect. Is your time being invested into the right subject?

2

Do

You may flick through this book and find it very useful. Or you may flick through this book and ask yourself "I know a lot of these tips already?" The key is to take away the tips that resonate with you and put them into action. This is not a book on how to render pretty pictures nor is it a book on technical drawings. This book provides you with motivational tips on how to achieve the best grades possible in your architectural degree.

3

University

Do your research on your chosen university. Find out where it ranks for architecture. How do the fees compare to other universities? Remember to make enquiries directly with the university before accepting your offer. Does your university offer scholarships? You could save a penny or two. If you are already at university what extras perks do the universities offer? Some universities offer re-imbursements at the end of the year. Get in touch with the student support team.

Wake up early

Start your day as early as possible, give yourself an advantage over your colleagues. Also remember the importance of sleep. Working late is not an efficient way to work as it effects your productivity the following day.

5

Choose your tutor wisely

The importance of your tutor is normally underestimated. Make sure you're being taught by a person who allows you to reach your full potential.

6

Water

Are you tired or dehydrated? Carry water with you where ever you go. Drinking lots of water can give you a new lease of life!

7

Prepare

Prepare today for tomorrows day of work. Spread your work load evenly and know what you're trying to achieve tomorrow.

Don't skip class

Tutorials are great occasions to get feedback. Even if you're behind attend class. The tutor respects this, they would rather see you behind than to not see you at all.

9

Are you serious?

If you are, get a private moment with your tutor and let them know the goals you're trying to achieve.

Also: Remember to touch base with your tutor and check that you're on the right path throughout the semester.

10

Seek

University puts you in an environment full of experienced tutors. I noticed that all my tutors had a different way of teaching, a different "style" of teaching if you like. Therefore I strongly recommend that you visit other tutors in the department to receive feedback from a different perspective.

11

Dissertations

When given the opportunity to write about a topic choose one which you are passionate about. Avoid choosing topics purely to be unique.

Top Tip: If you could not be an architect what would you be? How about incorporating that passion into an essay?

12

Structure

Before you begin to write spend the time structuring your essays. A weak structure results in a weak essay

Top tip: Before you settle on your title (or question) make sure it can be answered. I find it easier to form my title once the essay is finished.

13

Essays

Read books on how to write essays. There are many out there. Spend time studying your university's referencing and essay style. Compose a clear and professional essay.

14

Eat vitamins

It's easy to pick up deficiencies while studying. Your body is a temple treat it like one. Be careful with vitamin D, many hours stuck in front of a computer keeps you away from natural sunlight.

15

Record

Sometimes notes in your notepad is not effective. Record critiques and presentations on your phone for future reference. When possible ask a friend to video your crits, how are you composing yourself physically as well as verbally.

16

Feedback from presentations

Read and re-read feedback sheets long after the presentation is finished. It's easy to forget tutors notes I made my notes into a check list the day after my presentations.

17

Eat well before presentations

The last thing you want to do before a presentation is eat. But don't present on an empty stomach try to eat light foods like salads and fruit. Avoid heavy foods like fast food.

18

Presentation

Presentation is key in architecture, how does one represent an idea? Sell your work like a piece of art. Check out student exhibitions online and in person for inspiration. Think about framing work, hanging work or even projecting work.

19

Essay presentation

Remember to apply the same care to your written work. Essays don't have to be boring especially not in architecture. Be creative with your front cover, binding and layout. "Pinterest" is a great website to find inspiration.

20

Build a library

This is one of my favorite tips. Build yourself a library on your interests. Not only for now, but for your future. If you plan to have your own studio your collection will form a great base point for future reference books.

21

Lectures

Sometimes writing pages of lecture notes isn't always beneficial. Find a technique that works for you. Some people put enthuses on highlighting subheadings. Others create doodles to remember certain notes. Some people write directly into laptops and hand held devices so notes are neat and tidy.

22

Booz

You are a student you are allowed to enjoy it. But how about celebrating for a cause? For hard work or good results for example?

23

Documentaries

Watch documentaries when you can they are great for inspiration. Start with looking for videos based on the architects that inspire you. Le corbusier? Frank Lloyd Wright? Or even Leonardo Da Vinci?

24

Internet age

Read blogs, check websites and watch videos on architecture, be up to date and don't get left behind.

25

Compete

Have an eye on your classmates. Being competitive in moderation is healthy. Learning from your own mistakes is great but learning from other peoples mistakes is even easier.

26

Pick up a pencil

Draw every day, it's not only a beautiful skill but a useful one, especially in the office. Drawing is a skill that needs to be worked on, the more you practice the better you become.

27

Computer

Invest in a good computer. Look for a computer with a lot of "RAM". RAM is important for rendering and the running of your softwares. A good display screen is also beneficial.

28

Stationary

Invest in good stationary and equipment. Sometimes less is more. When you can afford it buy quality over quantity.

29

Facilities

You are at university! Utilise their equipment and facilities from light boxes to the drafting tables.

30

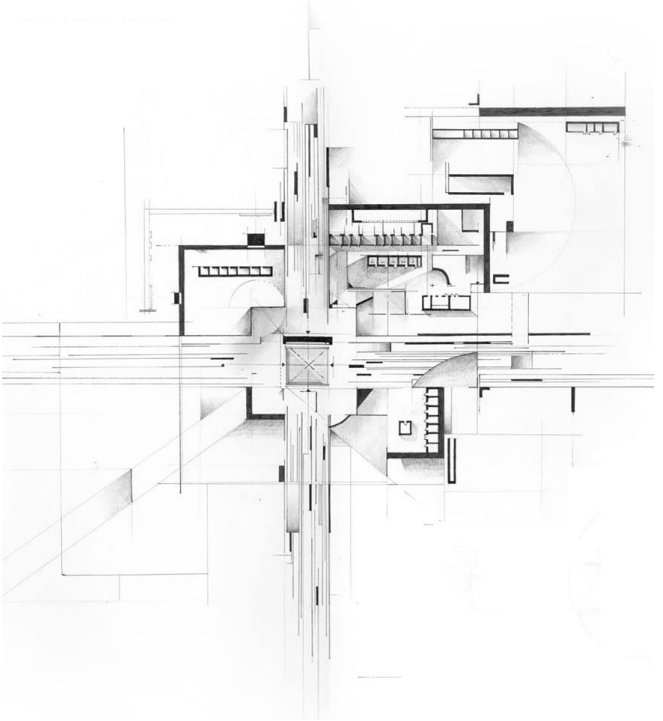
Workshops

You won't get many chances to use advanced model workshops take advantage while you can.

31

Relax

Put your feet up occasionally. Make time in your calendar for cool off periods. Remember to get some fresh air, go for a walk and reflect upon nature.



Improve

Develop your work, let conceptual drawings become your plans, sections and elevations. Let your work evolve and grow.

33

Recycle

Recycle old ideas, old sketches and old pieces of work. They can form extraordinary collages for example. I very rarely threw any of my work away. Work I didn't like I used to backdrop stronger pieces. This in turn expressed a graphical journey of my projects development.

34

Be inspired

Search other faculties for inspiration. This includes the arts, sciences and engineering departments. I was also inspired by friends studying other subjects. Their feedback on my work was often blunt and from a very literal perspective.

35

Be clear

Be clear verbally, be clear with your ideas and be clear with your point. Understand your work and have the answer for whatever question may be asked of you.

36

Philosophy

Read up on philosophers that interest you, they will benefit you in essays and project narratives. A few of my favorites include, Martin Heidegger and Karl Marx.

37

Software

Be with the times and master the programs that will benefit you most in the future. Personally I would focus on Autocad and Revit if you are coming from an architectural background. Vectorworks is popular amongst interior designers.

38

Friends

Have a selection of friends who you can listen to and trust. It is good to get honest feedback from people you can rely on.

39

Your path

Research surrounding subjects from interior design to engineering. Incorporate this passion into your work. It's never too early to find your niche.

Sketchbook

Buy or create your own sketchbook. Add it to your final presentation to show the journey of your project. I often made my own sketchbooks, there are many great home craft binding techniques online that make it possible to bind your books yourself.

Top Tip: Google "binding techniques"

41

The extra mile

Attend any extra lectures or workshops you can.

Top Tip: Google "Architecture CPD"

42

Have a hobby

It's nice to give the mind a rest occasionally. Steve jobs studied calligraphy, what is your hobby on the side?

43

Stay active

Healthy body, healthy mind. Going for a run is a great way to release stress and anxiety.

44

Watch a movie

Another way to snap out of study mode is to treat yourself to the occasional movie. It may not sound like a tip but I had many great ideas after watching a movie as it allowed me to reflect upon my work with fresh eyes afterwards.

45

Routine

Have a routine that works for you. Some people are more productive in the morning and some strive at night. With that said it is scientifically proven that the mind works best in the morning. The most important thing is to find a routine that works for you.

46

Calendar

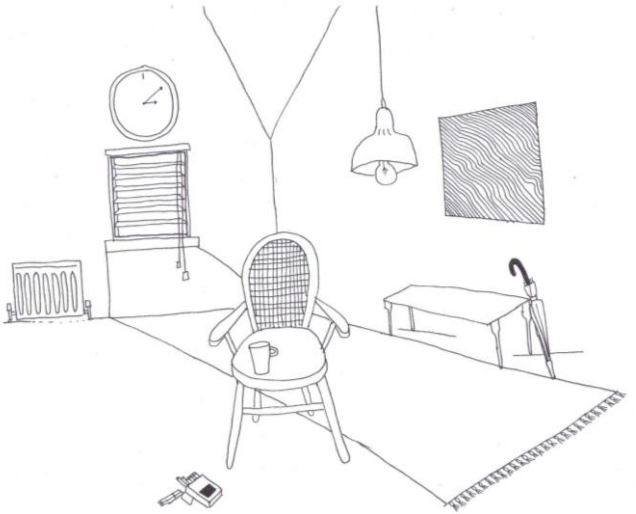
One of the most important tips to remember is your organization of time. Mark all your important deadlines, dates and exams then plan realistic goals to achieving them.

Top Tip: Read books on time management

47

Focus

If you lose focus overcome it, dust yourself off and start again.



Home

Choose your accommodation wisely. Do you have the space to make models? Is your desk big enough? Do you have enough light?

49

Housemates

Another very important tip that is often disregarded. Architecture demands a lot of work. Are your housemates respectful of this? Can you work in a quiet environment without being disturbed? If not all 100 tips will be twice as hard to achieve.

50

Results

Find the work of past students, see how they achieved promising results.

51

Past

Look not only to architects of the past but great people of the past. Be inspired by their values, style and techniques.

Stay humble

When things go well, stay respectful of others emotions.

53

Help

Ask for help but remember to offer help as well. Classmates aren't your enemies, help others when you can.

Eyes

Rest your eyes, massage them at night with clean hands.

55

Yoga

You will spend most of your time slumped over a chair. Remember to stretch.

56

Develop your strengths

Hand drawing, technical drawing, rendering. We are all gifted with an ability. Harness yours and develop it. Don't be a jack of all trades and a master of none!

57

Quality and Quantity

In terms of your project work aim for quality and quantity. Not one or the other. Produce as much work as you can and never get too obsessed with one piece.

58

Use your Bedroom

Use your bedroom to pin up your work. It's a great way to evaluate and prepare for your next presentation.

I had my work on my wall 24/7. That way I was familiar with the work. From the order it was displayed to being able to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the project.

59

Practice

Practice your presentations verbally, know your project inside out. Write your presentation out, then make bullet points of keywords to bring into the presentation.

Top Tip: Always print at least one to two days before your presentations! (even if your work is incomplete)

60

Project Brief

The topic you pick is vital, make sure you love it. Allow your tutor to be part of its journey.

61

Sustainability

Sustainability is becoming more and more acknowledged in the architectural industry, do your research and know the sector.

62

Details

From aesthetic details to technical details learn them both.

Top tip: Check out Detail magazine

63

Narrative

What's the story behind your work, express it with vigor. Treat your project like a book, give it a start, middle and end. Keep the audience entertained from beginning to end.

64

Consistent

Be consistent with your work. The worst projects stop and start and have no flow. Your project should read like a symphony.

65

Style

What is your style? Summarise it and develop it.

Top tip: Look at different movements, from brutalism to art deco. Merge styles and form your own identity.

66

Theme

Create a theme that flows with your work from start to finish. This also helps with the consistency.

Top tip: Keep to the same colour pallet, font, and paper type. Feel free to experiment with different paper sizes.

67

Budget

Budget yourself. From sketchbooks and printing to model making. Architecture is an expensive course, grasp your finances at the early stages.

68

Inspiration

Top Tip: Create a folder physically or electronically for all the things you find inspiring.

69

Archive

Archive your work. Organize your work, it will save you time in the long run.

70

Join up

If you can afford it become members of the architectural institution. Joining the RIBA is free for students.

71

Subscribe

Subscribe to art and architectural magazines that you may deem useful.

Top Tip: Some of my favorites include: Aesthetica, Domus, RIBA Jounal, GA Document.

72

Light at the end of the tunnel

Have the end goal in mind. What do you want to achieve by the end of the year?

Smile

Stay positive, even when times are stressful.

74

Be free

This is the time to be creative, this is the time where you are not limited to the boundaries of reality. Have fun with your project.

75

Context

Always refer back to the context and environment.
Take your site analysis seriously.

The People

Never forget about the people and their culture. Think with an open mind, who uses the architecture you are designing for and how might it affect the community?

77

Function

Does your building actually work? Does it fulfill the brief?

78

Scope

As you progress from part 1 to part 2 you are expected to take on more ambitious projects, be prepared for this.

79

Materials

Research materials, show your interest and passion.

80

Budget

Consider cost. How much would your building cost to build? You're not a quantity surveyor it doesn't need to be exact but show you respect the reality of the industry.

81

Form

Is your building aesthetically pleasing, what reaction does it provoke when people see it?

82

Fluidity

Does your architecture flow? What is the relationship from one area to the next?

83

Regulations

Jump the gun and know your building regulations.

84

Architectural Contracts

You do not need to know architectural contracts inside out but be aware of them for future reference.

85

Plan of work

Know the stages that real life projects get completed in.

86

PEDR Log sheets

When you begin your work experience log it in. It will save you valuable time in the long run.

87

Audio Books

Audio books are a great way to learn whilst studying.

88

CV

Keep your CV updated. I think one page for your CV is enough. Also include 3-4 pages of a sample portfolio to follow your CV. This saves time for the employer.

89

Experience

If you lack experience a great way to add to your CV is to include exhibitions or lectures you have attended.

90

Job

Apply to practices that relate to your ambitions and ethics.

91

Patience

Be patient, good things come to those who wait. Your projects might not get any recognition to begin with, give it time. Hard work pays off.

92

Be on time

Avoid being late for class, lectures and meetings. It's good preparation for work life.

93

Studio

Have a good working environment where you can be productive. If that's at home or at university, make your own hub to work in.

94

Be unrealistic

Set goals that seem too hard to achieve, aim for the stars and you will at least touch the sky.

95

Illness

Prepare for illness, it's inevitable that you will get sick. Spend the time to catch up when you are recovered.

96

Exhibitions

Attend exhibitions, nationwide and worldwide of varying industries.

Top Tip: Some of my favorites include, RA gallery, Tate modern, Usher Gallery, The Collection.

97

Student Presidents Medals

RIBA Presidents Student Medal is an award given to students who produce the strongest work of the year. Look at past work and acknowledge the standard.

98

Perspective

Turn a bad situation into a good one. If you have a bad crit remember that you have been offered lots of feedback. Feedback is always a good thing as it allows you to improve your work. This is a great opportunity to shine in your next presentation.

99

Enter Competitions

There is a growing number of student competitions available, don't miss your chance.

Top tip: Google

"Bustler"

"Deathbyarchitecture"

"Pinarchitecture"

100

Be

Be yourself.

Bonus Tips:

Are your renders or conceptual drawings looking unfinished? Here is a useful checklist to go through:

- Are there **people** in your drawings?

- Look to the **sky** are there birds, clouds, or even pollution?

- **Atmosphere** is there a reflection of weather and mood?

- **Texture** are you representing materials where needed.

- **Vehicles**, cyclists, **trees** and **nature.**

- Does your image have a **focal point.**

- The key to most of my imagery is emphasizing **light** and **dark** through **shadows** and **tones.**

- Are all your **shadows** pointing in the same direction when needed?

- Is **text** needed? If so keep it simple.

- Want your work to look more "architectural"? Add **dimensions,** change your drawing to **grayscale** and **elongate lines.**

Remember: The checklist is only a guide. Sometimes drawings are nicest left simple.

Free Advice

Interested in receiving more guidance? For a limited time only Zean Mair-MacFarlane is offering free advice to students through the following social platforms.

So why not stay in touch with the author via:

email: zeanmacfarlane@hotmail.co.uk

instagram: @zeanmacfarlane

tumblr: zeanmacfarlane

pinterest: zean mair-macfarlane

facebook: 100 Tips for architecture students

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